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Contacts: Stephanie Faison
908/626 0111 or stephanie@seafoodchoices.org
Joey Brookhart
831/277 0271 or joey@seafoodchoices.org

**SEAFOOD CHOICES ALLIANCE RELEASES LATEST RESEARCH ON
U.S. MARKET FOR SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD**

Chain restaurants, retailers and seafood wholesalers have taken action based on environmental considerations, see significant growth for sustainable seafood

(May 5, 2008, Silver Spring, MD) – Seafood Choices Alliance today releases a new report detailing the United States marketplace for sustainable seafood that includes a national survey of chain restaurants, retailers and seafood wholesalers and distributors. The report—titled, [*The U.S. Marketplace for Sustainable Seafood: Are We Hooked Yet?*](#)—affirms that while the issue of seafood sustainability has been on the radar screen of the U.S. seafood supply chain for a relatively short period of time, the movement is gaining real traction, most notably in retail and foodservice. The United States contributes heavily to the international seafood trade; it is the second largest importer, behind only Japan, and it is the fourth largest exporter.

“The results present positive evidence of a growing awareness in the seafood industry of the importance of choosing sustainable seafood, as well as the environmental impacts often associated with commercial fishing and aquaculture,” says Mike Boots, director of Seafood Choices Alliance. “The task now is turning this awareness into action on behalf of preserving our ocean resources. Business is beginning to see that procuring seafood that is sustainable benefits both an economic and an environmental bottom line.”

The U.S. Marketplace for Sustainable Seafood is a reference for stakeholders in the seafood industry working towards sustainability. This report includes benchmark research on two segments of the seafood value chain—seafood wholesalers and distributors and chain restaurants—as well as updating [previous research](#) on the retail sector.

Among key findings of the research:

- **Chain restaurants, retailers and wholesalers have taken action to remove seafood items from their product list due to environmental considerations**, and in greater numbers than a few years ago (20 percent of retailers in 2001 compared to 37 percent in 2007).
- **Even though majorities in each sector are concerned about the health of the ocean** and its impact on their businesses, 37% of chain restaurants and 69% of retailers expect sales of all seafood to increase in the next five years.
- The three sectors also **perceive their concern about the ocean’s health to be greater than that of their customers.**
- **Sustainable seafood appears to be a rising trend** based on the percent of sustainable seafood chain restaurants, retailers and wholesalers say they currently sell, as well as the expectation among all three sectors for significant growth of the percent of such seafood in five years.
- **However, these results also illustrate a wide degree of latitude in defining “sustainable”;** wholesalers in particular report currently carrying high percentages of sustainable product—over half of these respondents say more than 50% of the seafood they sell is sustainable.

Based on these findings, there appears to be a clear business case for continued efforts in identifying and procuring sustainable seafood, as well as room for improvement in communicating “sustainable” seafood policies with customers.

In 2006, U.S. consumers spent \$69.5 billion on fish and shellfish, just over seven percent of total food spending. At 16.5 pounds, per capita consumption increased by 0.3 pounds over 2005, but is still lower than its 2004 peak. And Americans split their seafood buying about equally between restaurants and retail outlets.

According to the FAO, in 2004 the value of world trade was \$71.5 billion—a 23 percent increase over 2000 levels—and preliminary estimates are that numbers will be even higher in 2005. Fish is one of the most highly traded food and feed commodities, with growth rates in developing countries higher than

traditional exports such as rice or coffee, from \$4.6 billion to more than \$20 billion in the past two decades. At the same time, the organization notes that three-quarters of wild fisheries are fully- to over-exploited.

About the report:

This report includes highlights of market research commissioned by Seafood Choices Alliance in 2007. The surveys, designed and conducted by the independent research firm Edge Research, relied on in-depth telephone surveys with seafood decision-makers at chain restaurants (corporate executive chefs, menu designers and buyers), retailers (seafood buyers, independent store owners and seafood counter managers) and wholesalers. Nationwide surveys were conducted to uncover the influences and concerns of those buying seafood for resale to consumers.

The U.S. Marketplace for Sustainable Seafood executive summary and table of contents, as well as the complete 34-page report, are available for download online at <http://www.seafoodchoices.org/resources/USmarketplace.php>.

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To arrange for interviews please contact Stephanie Faison at 908.626.0111 or stephanie@seafoodchoices.org or Joey Brookhart at 831.277.0271 or joey@seafoodchoices.org.

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Seafood Choices Alliance is retailers, wholesalers, fishermen and fish farmers, restaurateurs and conservationists, working together to transform the seafood marketplace into one that is environmentally sustainable and economically profitable. Signature projects include the Seafood Summit, the only annual business-conservation conference on sustainable seafood; roundtables and workshops engaging leaders from the business and conservation sectors around key issues; and the Seafood Champion Awards, which recognize outstanding leadership in advancing the market for ocean-friendly seafood. Seafood Choices Alliance is a program of SeaWeb. For more information, visit <http://www.seafoodchoices.org/>

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